

SREB Educator Effectiveness Progress Monitoring Report Oklahoma Fall 2016

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I. Introduction

Research shows the impact an effective teacher has on a student’s ability to realize his/her full potential can be significant. To promote effective teaching, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is helping state education agency (SEA) leaders enhance teacher evaluation systems to provide teachers with the feedback and support they need to improve their craft and advance student learning. With assistance from Education First, SREB designed a three-year review process, the Educator Effectiveness Progress Monitoring Review, to help SEA leaders understand if and how their evaluation systems align with principles of strong systems. SREB and Education First recently completed first-year reviews of several participating states and are issuing individualized reports to support their continuous improvement processes. Each report includes an analysis of review findings and provides recommendations for how SEA leaders can make their evaluation systems even stronger by developing and/or improving their states’ evaluation designs, policies and practices so both teachers and students succeed.

These first-year reviews and subsequent reviews during years two and three will focus on SREB’s *five principles* found in systems that support effective teaching:

- 1. The system contributes to improvements in instructional practice and student learning;*
- 2. The system measures effective teaching;*
- 3. The system uses measures that are reliable and valid, therefore producing accurate data;*
- 4. The system produces results that teachers and leaders can use to improve instruction, enhance professional development and create more efficient human capital development strategies; and,*
- 5. The system engages stakeholders and partners to ensure implementation is successful.*

As part of the review process, SREB and Education First identified and analyzed evidence that the state’s teacher evaluation system successfully adheres to each of the five principles. They reviewed multiple sources of information, including documentation of state policies, programs and practices, as well as evaluation data. They also conducted a multi-day site visit to the state

and interviewed SEA staff, local education agency (LEA) staff and stakeholders who contribute to the implementation of the state's evaluation system.

This report presents the results of SREB and Education First's review of Oklahoma's efforts to implement an evaluation system that supports effective teaching. The report also includes recommendations for how the state can continue to advance its work and suggestions for technical assistance it may consider in the future.

II. Background

In May 2010, the Oklahoma Legislature passed Senate Bill 2033. This legislation created the statewide Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE) and set policy for evaluation, pay, retention and dismissal of teachers in the state. Originally, this law required that teachers receive evaluation ratings based on a qualitative component (50 percent observations) and a quantitative component (35 percent value-added scores and 15 percent other student academic measures). The Legislature intended for the combination of these two components to produce a summative rating of superior, highly effective, effective, needs improvement or ineffective for each teacher.

The Oklahoma State Board of Education also approved three models for the qualitative component: Tulsa Public Schools' TLE Observation and Evaluation System (Tulsa model), Learning Sciences International's (LSI) Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model (Marzano model) and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's TAP Framework. To date, all districts in Oklahoma have adopted either the Tulsa or Marzano models.

In accordance with state law, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) began piloting TLE in districts in the 2012-13 school year, with the goal of full implementation by 2016-17. TLE implementation was controversial. Significant opposition to value-added measures and student learning objectives (SLOs), which comprised the quantitative component, created sufficient public pressure to spur a legislative response. In May 2016, the Oklahoma Legislature passed House Bill 2957 to revise Senate Bill 2033. Among the most significant changes, the Legislature eliminated the requirement for a quantitative component in TLE, while still allowing districts to continue using this component, should they choose to do so, at their own expense. The new law also calls for OSDE to work with districts to establish individualized professional development programs for teachers, including an annual professional development growth goal tailored to each teacher's needs. OSDE is set to pilot the growth goal in the 2017-18 school year and integrate it into TLE the following year.

This year is a period of transition for TLE. OSDE recently formed a working group and five regional TLE advisory committees that include diverse stakeholders, including teachers, to inform the state's approach to the new growth goal requirement. OSDE believes this is the right moment to rebuild trust in TLE, especially among practitioners, and anchor the evaluation process more explicitly in professional growth.

SREB and Education First completed the first-year review of TLE from September to December 2016, including a two-day site visit to Oklahoma City in October 2016. They also reviewed findings from the first administration of the Measurement Learning and Improvement (MLI) survey of Oklahoma educators in 2016, which gauged teacher perceptions of TLE implementation in the state. The [Appendix](#) includes additional information about the review methodology, sources of evidence and the individuals interviewed for this report.

III. Strengths and Recommended Opportunities

Based on the results of the first-year review of TLE, SREB and Education First identified several strengths and opportunities for improvement in Oklahoma’s system. These recommendations aim to help OSDE reflect on its work thus far and take action to continue aligning TLE to the [five principles](#) of effective evaluation systems.

Strengths of TLE:

1) Positive relationships with stakeholders: After the contentious debates over the quantitative component of TLE, the current administration at OSDE has prioritized cultivating relationships with state and local partners, including professional associations, peer state agencies, and district and school staff. “I’m so pleased with the movement toward positivity [at OSDE],” remarked one partner. Reflecting on their collaboration with OSDE, another stakeholder said, “All of this [joint work] has happened because of relationships.” TLE staff have a positive reputation, with some district TLE leads and practitioners citing them by name for their good-faith efforts to improve the TLE process. These relationships are building momentum for the implementation of TLE and of other promising strategies related to teacher and principal preparation, teacher professional development and similar OSDE reforms.

Recommendation to maintain TLE’s strong performance in this area →

□ **Turn positive relationships into concrete plans for collaboration:** Several interviewees observed that OSDE has the assets needed to build stronger partnerships, including the right leadership, level of commitment and emphasis on engagement. The next step is for OSDE to meet with partners to develop specific plans, strategies and actions to enhance TLE implementation moving forward. In fact, stakeholders listed some key challenges the system faces in the coming years and offered compelling ideas for working together with OSDE to tackle these challenges (many of which are listed below as opportunities for improvement). OSDE should capitalize on this goodwill and its robust relationships to define a timeline for action.

2) Willingness to listen, engage and collaborate with stakeholders: OSDE has made continuous engagement with stakeholders a cornerstone of its approach to TLE. Stakeholders consistently praised the agency for demonstrating a genuine interest in their perspectives, even if the feedback is more constructive than glowing. “Historically, this administration has been very open,” said one interviewee. Another person noted, “We have great communication with the state department. [...] We’ve had disagreements, but we’re going in the right direction.” Still another said, “They’ve shown that they’re interested in

hearing from everyone about what’s needed to improve education.” Many credit the State Superintendent’s collaborative leadership style for OSDE’s new tact, with one person noting that the superintendent “has been able to keep these working relationships going by keeping people at the table.”

Recommendation to maintain TLE’s strong performance in this area →

- **Consistently demonstrate to educators how OSDE is using their feedback:** Teachers and principals want to know that OSDE is listening to – and acting on – their feedback to inform TLE implementation. For example, OSDE’s new five regional TLE advisory committees, which involve teachers, administrators and others, met for the first time in the fall 2016. The response from committee participants was overwhelmingly positive, as teachers valued the opportunity to share their ideas with the agency. To foster greater trust, OSDE should close the feedback loop by regularly updating teachers in meetings, newsletters and other venues about how the agency is incorporating stakeholder input to improve TLE.

- 3) Potential for policy stability after significant changes to TLE:** Oklahoma’s teachers have experienced major policy changes in recent years. The rollout and later discontinuation of different TLE components, such as SLOs, have created confusion and eroded trust in the state. A district TLE lead said, “[TLE] implementation within [our] district was challenging, but [the] bigger challenge were the constant changes in expectations and training. Effort was spent on things that went away.” On top of that, the Oklahoma Legislature repealed the Common Core State Standards in 2014 and approved new academic standards in March 2016, which districts began using at the start of the 2016-17 school year. After all these shifts, some stakeholders are optimistic, pointing to HB 2957 as the beginning of much-needed consistency. One interviewee said: “It’s time to get to some stability. This [moment after the new law] could be the opportunity to do that.” In fact, OSDE does not expect the Oklahoma Legislature to make any major revisions to the TLE law in the next year.

Recommendation to maintain TLE’s strong performance in this area →

- **Continue engaging policymakers about the importance of policy stability for TLE’s success:** OSDE needs time to roll out the new professional growth goal component of TLE and more broadly, to reframe the core purpose of TLE as facilitating teachers’ professional growth. The agency is less likely to succeed if the Oklahoma Legislature enacts additional major changes to the TLE law in the near-term. OSDE should communicate the value of policy stability to lawmakers directly and through partners, reinforcing that it will take time for districts and schools to adjust to new practices. In this communication, OSDE should also continue sharing stories of TLE successes and challenges from across the state to show Oklahoma’s progress toward a system that is fair and accurate.

Why do these strengths matter?

Stakeholder relationships and deep engagement combined with an enabling policy environment are necessary ingredients for ensuring the implementation of an evaluation system is successful. These partnerships create the potential for better alignment of efforts, deeper collaboration to extend the state’s implementation capacity, and greater buy-in and support for TLE.

Opportunities for Improvement:

1) Poor quality of evaluator trainings: Interviewees raised concerns about the quality, content and delivery of the evaluator trainings conducted by the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administrators (CCOSA) for the Tulsa model and LSI for the Marzano model, particularly the recertification trainings. These trainings do not appear to provide evaluators with meaningful opportunities to practice minimizing bias, calibrating ratings with peers, giving high-quality feedback and engaging teachers in conversations about their professional growth. One principal shared, “I wanted to know if I had biases, but didn’t get time to work on that.” Another stakeholder said, “I think most principals don’t get training on engaging teachers in a conversation about teaching and learning.” Some interviewees also questioned the value of having in-person recertification trainings instead of online modules. Historically, OSDE has not played a quality control role: Tulsa Public Schools is responsible for the Tulsa model trainings and LSI provides standard Marzano model trainings to client districts. However, as of fall 2016, OSDE is investigating legal options for exercising more quality control authority over these trainings to enact improvements.

Recommendation to improve performance in this area →

- Clarify the state’s role in quality control over evaluator trainings and make a case for this role:** OSDE’s legal department will assess whether the agency has quality control authority under current law or if this role requires new legislation. This determination will guide OSDE’s approach to evaluator trainings in the near future. In the meantime, OSDE should engage Tulsa model districts and the current training providers, specifically Tulsa Public Schools and CCOSA, and major clients of LSI, such as Oklahoma City Public Schools, to explore how they are monitoring the quality of these trainings and the challenges they face in acting on feedback from participants. In the spirit of collaboration, OSDE should identify gaps at the district level that the agency might fill, and enlist the support of partners to share their own feedback on the evaluator trainings with the districts as well. As OSDE makes the case for a new role, the agency can emphasize the need for more quality control to justify the significant costs districts incur for these trainings, especially in the current state context of major budget cuts.

2) Professional growth goal challenges: While all stakeholders agreed that the growth goal is a positive addition to TLE, some raised doubts about OSDE’s capacity to assist districts with its implementation. They expressed specific concerns about: (1) ensuring that the growth goals teachers create are meaningful and of high quality, not “watered down” and “generic,” (2) providing guidance and supports to districts to help them apply the growth goal with fidelity across their schools, and (3) facilitating or delivering effective professional development to help teachers meet their growth goals. As one teacher said, “We need to provide support to the administrators to use this correctly [and] we need to let teachers know that this is not punitive.” Yet there is disagreement at this time over the role of OSDE in monitoring the quality of the growth goal, with some teachers strongly preferring a “hands-off” approach that puts the onus on principals and teachers.

Recommendation to improve performance in this area →

- Use the growth goal working group to develop an evidence-based framework and guidance:** Participants in the working group appear to be highly engaged and

committed to the concept of a growth goal as part of TLE. The group should investigate credible research and discuss what makes for an effective growth goal, give advice on a clear and simple framework rooted in this evidence for districts to use, and develop key guidance for growth goal implementation, including teacher professional development. OSDE can ask the group to consider how the growth goal should link to a teacher's TLE observation ratings. There is a unique opportunity for OSDE to align its guidance with the Learning Forward standards for professional learning, which the State Board of Education is likely to adopt or express an interest in pursuing at its December 2016 meeting. The group can also capture best practices from Oklahoma districts already using growth goals and select appropriate professional development resources.

- 3) Inconsistent messaging:** OSDE has not consistently communicated a purpose for TLE that resonates with teachers, administrators and other key stakeholders. In prior years, many perceived the purpose to be compliance, which they characterized as TLE's "gotcha" approach. Yet the new growth goal creates an opportunity for OSDE to change this perception. One teacher said, "I don't think the state has made anything clear in the last few years. I like the professional growth goal. But up until recently I haven't had clarity on anything." The majority of interviewees stressed that after years of distrust, effective communications and messaging about professional growth is critical to expanding and deepening practitioner engagement in TLE.

Recommendation to improve performance in this area →

- **Spotlight effective practices and share resources to emphasize TLE's growth orientation:** OSDE has limited capacity to offer one-on-one support to districts and schools on-site. However, the agency is in a good position to enable and accelerate knowledge sharing among districts regionally and statewide to build local capacity to implement TLE and enhance the professional growth of teachers. Through digital channels, webinars and in-person convenings, OSDE can bring attention to lessons learned and models from across the state, aggregate and make available high-quality tools and resources, and connect districts to one another for joint consultations and troubleshooting. Such a role holds special promise for rural districts, as these are often the most difficult to reach in a cost-effective way. This approach would allow OSDE to target districts that are struggling with TLE (e.g., where there are multiple evaluators rating all teachers a "3"). In all of these efforts, OSDE should communicate TLE's focus on teacher growth to deepen understanding and support for the system.

- 4) Emerging data analysis capacity at the state and local levels:** In fall 2016, a new data analyst at OSDE began conducting analyses of 2015-16 TLE data. OSDE staff are asking smart questions about the data to spotlight implementation challenges. For example, OSDE staff identified evaluators who rated all or most of their teachers a "3" on their respective observation rubric and evaluators with a higher-than-average "case load" of evaluations, both of which pose major risks to fidelity of implementation of TLE. Since this data capacity is new, OSDE should develop data analysis approaches and routines that are consistent from year to year, particularly for testing the relationships between TLE ratings, district and school outcomes, and student achievement. At the same time, there is little evidence that

many districts and schools have the capacity necessary to use their TLE data to monitor implementation of the system and take action to address problems. OSDE's new data literacy cohorts, launched in partnership with the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA), target rural districts, but the agency can do more to engage larger urban and suburban districts in conversations about data use and analysis.

Recommendation to improve performance in this area →

- **Build data analysis capacity through routines and partnerships:** OSDE considers TLE's 2015-16 data a "baseline," given the recent changes in policy and a new sense of optimism among stakeholders. At this time, OSDE should systematize the analysis of TLE data for the coming years by pinpointing key questions to ask of the data annually, routinely evaluating the statistical properties of the system and conducting correlations of TLE data and measures of student achievement. There is a particularly promising opportunity for OSDE to work with OEQA to share data, inform the development of teacher surveys and incorporate TLE data into existing OEQA resources (such as district and school profiles). While the new data literacy cohorts are now up-and-running, OSDE should consider additional ways to integrate data capacity-building supports in other activities the agency leads.

- 5) Geographic disparities in supports:** Interviewees across stakeholder groups shared a concern that small, rural districts lack the resources, capacity and supports from the state to implement TLE with fidelity. A principal from a rural district shared, "I find it challenging to help teachers on professional growth and development in a rural area because opportunities are few. [It] becomes a time factor. I'm head of everything at the school." For example, OSDE is exploring different models to deliver TLE resources and technical assistance to rural districts, especially related to the growth goal. However, the agency is proceeding with caution to avoid repeating the ineffective regional efforts of the past.

Recommendation to improve performance in this area →

- **Leverage the regional TLE advisory committees to begin developing a model for the delivery of regional supports:** OSDE's regional TLE advisory committees seek to build sustained engagement from local stakeholders. As OSDE continues to shape the charge of these committees in the 2016-17 school year, the agency should consider using these venues to gather ideas and feedback on the most effective and efficient ways to provide TLE implementation supports at a regional level. Future committee meetings can also serve to connect smaller districts to larger districts for consultations and information exchange about TLE best practices. By soliciting input from local teachers, administrators and others in these committees, OSDE can cultivate early buy-in for a new regional approach that meets the specific needs of rural districts.

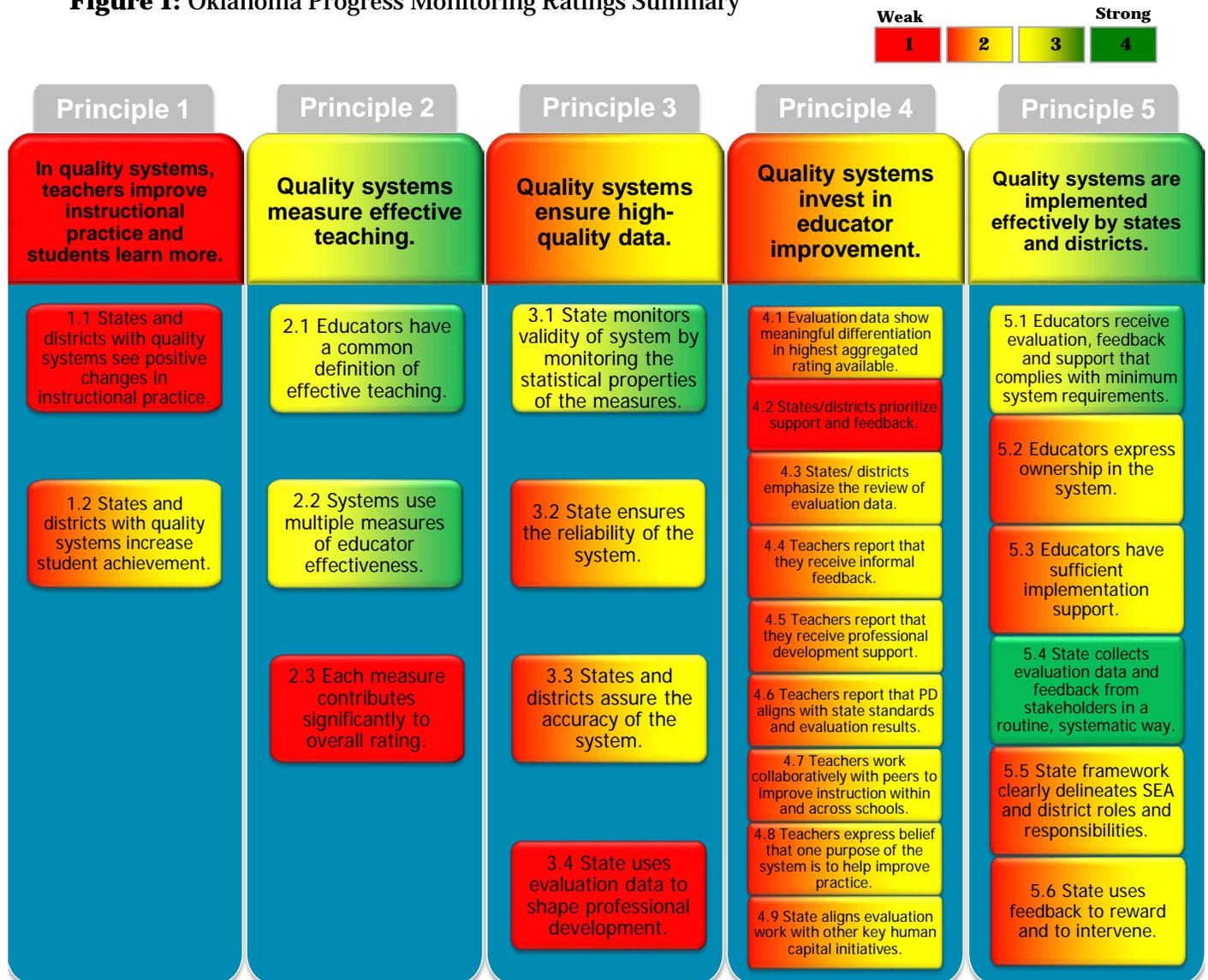
Why do these opportunities matter?

These opportunities serve to strengthen the continuous improvement cycle for TLE, including: (1) communications to convey a coherent strategy and cultivate support, (2) implementation to increase capacity and align state and local resources effectively, and (3) analysis and reflection to assess implementation in a systematic way for future adjustments to the system.

IV. Educator Effectiveness Progress Monitoring Findings

As part of the review process, SREB and Education First rated TLE against a series of indicators for each of the [five principles](#) of high-quality teacher effectiveness and support systems. The purpose of these ratings is two-fold: to take stock of Oklahoma’s meaningful progress with TLE and to highlight specific areas where OSDE might intentionally focus its efforts to improve TLE in the coming year. These ratings also align with the detailed analysis of strengths and opportunities found in [Section III](#) of this report. Figure 1, which is color-coded to facilitate interpretation, shows the summary ratings for each principle and its sub-components.

Figure 1: Oklahoma Progress Monitoring Ratings Summary



The following narrative offers additional evidence and rationale for the ratings.

1. In quality systems, teachers improve instructional practice and students learn more.

1.1 States and districts with quality systems see positive changes in instructional practice.

2

OSDE has not analyzed any changes in the distribution of TLE ratings from 2014-15 to 2015-16 to determine if there have been positive changes in instructional practice across districts. Staff indicate significant data quality issues with the 2014-15 TLE data, including data entry errors by low-capacity districts that lack a software program to upload the state's required information automatically. For the collection of 2015-16 data, OSDE made changes to the Qualitative Report Template to minimize these errors. OSDE staff consider the 2015-16 data a good "baseline" for future analyses.

MLI survey results show that 77 percent and 67 percent of teachers reported making "some changes" to the way they plan and/or teach based on informal feedback and ratings received through the TLE process, respectively. Only 4 percent of teacher respondents said they made "major changes."

1.2 States and districts with quality systems increase student achievement.

1

OSDE staff and stakeholders believe TLE can contribute to improvements in student achievement. However, due to implementation challenges and policy changes, it is unlikely that TLE has made this kind of impact to date. An interviewee shared, "If we can get [teachers] to truly understand and embrace the feedback component of TLE, I believe [TLE] will improve student performance." In a recent analysis, OSDE found a low correlation between the 2015-16 TLE ratings by school and the Oklahoma A-F school report card scores, which OSDE calculates based on a combination of student academic performance and growth. For example, there are several schools with low A-F scores and high TLE ratings. These inconsistencies underscore the need for schools across the state to improve the quality of TLE implementation in order to ensure the evaluation system helps teachers increase student learning.

Oklahoma's student achievement trends from 2014-15 to 2015-16 are mixed. According to state assessment results, there was a notable proficiency rate increase in 5th grade reading (+6 points), and a decrease in high school English III (-5 points). Overall, among students in grades 3-8 taking the math and reading state assessments, proficiency rates increased in four cases, decreased in four cases and stayed the same in four cases. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments, there were modest proficiency changes from 2013 to 2015, with 4th grade reading showing the greatest improvement (+3 points). Since the state does not administer student surveys, it is unclear whether students have become more deeply engaged in learning as districts implemented TLE in recent years.

2. Quality systems measure effective teaching.

2.1 Educators have a common definition of effective teaching.

3

The longstanding Oklahoma Criteria for Effective Teaching and Administrative Performance outline the standards for teaching across practice and outcome indicators,

including one indicator that focuses on student achievement. There is evidence that the TLE models align to these standards. For example, LSI published an [alignment study](#) for the Marzano model. However, the extent to which these standards are well known and in use by districts is unclear. Educators are more likely to refer to the observational rubric in their respective TLE model for a definition of effective teaching. Because these rubrics use different terminology to describe what constitutes effective teaching, teachers appear to lack a common, statewide definition that applies to all districts.

2.2 Systems use multiple measures of educator effectiveness.

3

State policy requires classroom observations and the use of validated observational rubrics. HB 2957 made the quantitative component in TLE optional for districts. Unfortunately, as a result, only the largest districts in the state – Tulsa and Oklahoma City – will continue using local student growth measures. However, TLE will take into account student achievement indirectly through the new growth goal, which must address specific teaching practices that correlate with increased student achievement. OSDE staff believe that TLE can facilitate effective teaching in the state, especially through feedback after classroom observations, but noted uneven fidelity of implementation in districts as a key obstacle to realizing this potential to date.

2.3 Each measure contributes significantly to overall rating.

1

Since HB 2957 requires a phased implementation of the new growth goal, it is unclear at this early point how districts will consider these goals in the summative TLE ratings of teachers, if at all.

3. Quality systems ensure high-quality data.

3.1 State monitors validity of system by monitoring the statistical properties of the measures.

3

A new data analyst is beginning to analyze the statistical properties of the 2015-16 TLE data to compare results by evaluation model, region, district, school and evaluator. OSDE is in the initial stages of developing consistent routines for monitoring these properties in the future, given that TLE was “in flux” during prior years. Recent analyses show that the overall standard deviations for TLE ratings are normal.

3.2 State ensures the reliability of the system.

2

While state law requires that evaluators receive training, there are significant deficiencies in the quality, content and delivery of evaluator trainings for the Tulsa and Marzano models, especially the recertification trainings. These trainings appear to focus primarily on communicating the basics of the models and the process for conducting evaluations, but fail to equip evaluators with the specific skills needed to implement TLE reliably and at levels of high quality. Most stakeholders interviewed shared that evaluators lack opportunities at these trainings to practice (individually and in groups) minimizing bias in their scoring, rating individual evaluation components reliably, giving actionable feedback and supporting deep teacher reflection. These challenges are major contributors to the uneven quality of TLE implementation in the state.

3.3 State assures the accuracy of the system.

2

In general, many teachers who responded to the MLI survey agreed that their administrators and teacher-leaders are equipped with the knowledge and resources to implement TLE accurately. For example, 73 percent of teacher respondents said school leaders have adequate expertise and deliver effective guidance; 74 percent said that teacher-leaders have adequate expertise and deliver effective guidance. Additionally, 69 percent said school leaders offer materials, tools or equipment to help teachers work together more effectively; 70 percent responded that teacher-leaders did the same.

3.4 State uses evaluation data to shape professional development.

1

In 2015, OSDE created a new online dashboard for TLE, called [OKED](#), to provide “teachers, school leaders, and school partners with relevant, timely data that empower them to act strategically in improving student outcomes and supporting effective teaching practice.” While districts may use their own TLE data to adapt professional development offerings to the needs of their teachers, there is no requirement to do so from the state. To date, OSDE has engaged a few large districts in conversations about data-informed professional development, but the agency does not have sufficient capacity to provide technical assistance to all districts. Notably, HB 2957 calls for the growth goals to address competencies in the qualitative component of TLE, which creates an additional incentive for districts to use TLE data to provide professional development aligned to the goals of their teachers.

4. Quality systems invest in educator improvement.

4.1 Evaluation data show meaningful differentiation in highest aggregated rating available.

2

The 2015-16 TLE data shows that the evaluation system is not successfully differentiating teaching performance, as most teachers receive a summative rating of effective or better. Across the two TLE models, 8 percent of teachers are rated effective, 70 percent highly effective and 22 percent superior. Out of nearly 42,000 teachers in 496 districts across the state, only 86 teachers in 25 districts earned a needs improvement or ineffective rating. The distribution of ratings also differs slightly by TLE model, with more teachers receiving a superior rating with the Marzano model than with the Tulsa model (approximately 22 percent versus 18 percent). These findings support what teachers and principals have shared – the two models are not perfectly comparable. Some teachers complain that it is much harder to earn a top rating in the Tulsa model.

4.2 States/districts prioritize support and feedback.

1

State law does not require post-observation and/or end-of-year conferences, nor data-informed self-reflection during the TLE process. However, the evaluation models do recommend many of these practices for districts. TLE’s Theory of Action also lists self-reflection as part of a continuous learning evaluation cycle, but it is unclear how many districts follow through with these recommendations on a consistent basis.

4.3 States/districts emphasize the review of evaluation data to improve instruction.

2

OSDE does not require training or provide guidance to districts on how to deliver training to teachers on the use of TLE data to improve instruction. In 2016, OSDE and the OEQA created data literacy cohorts of administrators to train leaders in rural areas on how to build a data literate culture. The primary purpose of these cohorts was to improve fidelity of TLE implementation in rural districts.

4.4 Teachers report that they receive informal feedback.

2

Teachers included in the MLI survey receive feedback on general teaching strategies (78 percent) more often than other kinds of specific feedback, such as feedback on how to improve lesson plans (50 percent), how to teach to meet the current state standards (47 percent) and how to assess students (55 percent). The person providing feedback to teachers is most likely to be a principal, followed by a peer educator.

4.5 Teachers report that they receive professional development support.

2

According to the MLI survey results, 73 percent of teachers said that the professional development they received had a positive impact on their classroom instruction and 72 percent said it helped them provide instruction that improved student learning. Only 60 percent of respondents said that this professional development helped them improve in the areas on which TLE focuses. Just over half of respondents (51 percent) reported that their district asks for their feedback on professional development activities.

4.6 Teachers report that professional development aligns with state standards and evaluation results.

2

The evidence points to weak alignment between professional development, TLE and the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Districts started implementing the new standards in the 2016-17 school year at a time when TLE is also undergoing major changes. OSDE's academic team has prioritized standards implementation, which has not permitted much time for alignment with the efforts of peer departments.

4.7 Teachers work collaboratively with peers to improve instruction, both within and across schools.

2

MLI survey results show that 90 percent teachers find an opportunity at their school to meet with peers to discuss the state academic standards and student learning or to develop instructional materials. Yet only 50 percent observe other teachers to get ideas for instruction or to provide feedback. Even fewer teachers (17 percent) said they collaborated with peers outside their school, either to discuss academics or to develop instructional materials.

4.8 Teachers express belief that one purpose of the system is to help improve practice.

2

Teachers are not clear on the purpose of TLE. While 70 percent of MLI survey respondents believe the goal of TLE is to comply with state policies, 67 percent also acknowledge that TLE aims to improve student learning and promote teacher self-reflection. Notably, only 38 percent of teachers agree that the purpose of TLE is to

promote teacher growth and development, which is an area of particular interest for OSDE in light of the new professional growth goal requirement in HB 2957.

4.9 State aligns evaluation work with other key human capital initiatives.

2

Given the past tensions surrounding TLE implementation, OSDE has de-emphasized the TLE's role in human capital decisions and is instead focusing on the system's role in driving professional growth. Although districts have control over how they use their own TLE data, some teachers and principals said they did not know whether their districts are incorporating this information in any significant way outside of professional development. State law does include key provisions related to the use of evaluation results: teachers rated ineffective in two consecutive years are eligible for dismissal starting in 2017-18 and districts must use this data in tenure and layoff decisions.

5. Quality systems are implemented effectively by states and districts.

5.1 Educators receive evaluation, feedback and support that complies with minimum system requirements.

3

In the MLI survey, 88 percent of teachers reported receiving an evaluation rating during the last school year (the remaining 12 percent either did not receive a rating or did not know). Nearly all respondents (92 percent) said that someone had observed them teaching a class, most often their principal, and a similar number (86 percent) said they received some kind of feedback on their teaching.

5.2 Educators express ownership in the system.

2

When asked in the MLI survey whether TLE is fair to other teachers in their school, 53 percent of teacher respondents agreed.

5.3 Educators have sufficient implementation support.

2

Many teachers who responded to the MLI survey believe their schools lack sufficient supports to implement TLE well. Only 56 percent said they received leadership support such as key information and guidance about the evaluation process; 46 percent said they had the time to complete TLE materials; 53 percent said they had materials to facilitate the evaluation process; and 46 percent said they had access to staff with specific expertise within and outside their school. Yet less than half of all teacher respondents (45 percent) reported that TLE implementation posed a high burden in time and effort during the prior school year.

5.4 State collects evaluation data and feedback from stakeholders in a routine and systematic way.

4

OSDE has a standard process for collecting TLE ratings by domain and indicator through a Qualitative Report Template in Microsoft Excel. OSDE only collects ratings by domain and indicator, not the feedback provided to teachers by their designated evaluator. Still, OSDE's TLE data allows the agency to break down ratings by district, school, teacher and evaluator. For example, OSDE has identified evaluators who provide the same rating of "3" to all or most of their teachers, which suggests a local implementation problem. Staff are also looking at regional trends to identify districts and schools with significantly

higher or lower TLE ratings than the state average. In the future, these analyses may surface lessons to enhance the implementation of TLE, which OSDE may disseminate through the monthly TLE newsletter, EngageOK and Elevate blogs, and social media.

OSDE is making a concerted effort to gather feedback regularly from diverse groups of stakeholders through various channels, including the growth goal working group, five regional TLE advisory committees, monthly TLE newsletters (which solicit comments from recipients) and formal and informal presentations to districts, schools and others. In the past, OSDE has conducted focus groups and administered surveys to gather teacher feedback. All interviewees expressed that OSDE is open to receiving constructive comments and is willing to act on the feedback. While leaders at partner organizations know how to communicate with OSDE in non-routine ways, some rank-and-file teachers do not consistently hear about different ways to share their perspectives with the agency. Additionally, since capacity remains a challenge for OSDE, staff are discussing with partners how best to collaborate to extend the agency's capacity.

5.5 State framework clearly delineates SEA and district roles and responsibilities.

2

The state maintains key requirements that all district TLE systems must meet and delineates which decisions districts can make at the local level, such as retention or dismissal of teachers and the designation of evaluators. The [law requires OSDE](#) to “collect data regarding the implementation of the TLE” for the agency to accomplish specific activities, such as “monitoring implementation of teacher evaluations, providing data for the improvement of teacher preparation programs, and providing information to the TLE Commission.” For its part, per HB 2957, “each school district board of education shall maintain and annually review [...] a written policy of evaluation and corresponding professional development for all teachers and administrators.”

In practice, fidelity of implementation varies greatly across the state and between districts, schools and especially evaluators. Reflecting on this topic, a district TLE lead shared, “[We’re] battling as a district over-inflation of scores for teachers, with principals trying to manage...giving feedback.” A principal noted, “I don’t believe that all evaluators use the instrument as designed by law. Some just get it done and don’t write comments.”

5.6 State uses feedback to reward and to intervene.

2

OSDE seeks to intervene at multiple points in the career of a teacher through TLE and other efforts. OSDE staff emphasize that “as we issue [teaching] certificates we’re obligated to support [teachers] with continuous education and professional learning. It’s a promise from us.” To achieve this, OSDE envisions providing high-quality teacher preparation and induction, evaluator trainings, feedback and professional development and data literacy training in schools to help teachers and principals engage in informed conversations about teaching performance. However, these elements are not yet converging into a comprehensive strategy for the state, which OSDE staff recognize as a next step for their work. In part, this is due to lack of funds for a teacher induction program, no direct authority over evaluator trainings and low capacity to provide robust

technical assistance for TLE implementation. Understandably, some teachers and principals said they are not clear on what OSDE's strategy is to support teachers.

The growth goal requirement will be critical to how this strategy develops over the next year. For example, OSDE is exploring an idea to align the growth goal to the process for renewal of teaching certification that would entail asking teachers to demonstrate the professional development they have received, in keeping with their growth goals, to be eligible for renewal. OSDE is also working with teacher preparation programs to ensure graduates are aware of the expectations in TLE, including the focus on professional growth, before starting a full-time teaching position in Oklahoma.

OSDE does not require districts to use TLE data to assess needs, deploy and gauge the effectiveness of teacher supports, and reallocate resources at the school and district levels. These are decisions left to local stakeholders, although the agency is working to increase local data capacity (and thereby indirectly help districts make these decisions) through data literacy cohorts. Furthermore, OSDE does not have a strategy in place to give high-performing teachers and schools greater flexibility from state regulations, nor an approach to encourage the use of improvement plans for struggling teachers.

V. Technical Assistance Possibilities

In summary, to enhance TLE as a feedback and support system for all of Oklahoma's teachers, SREB and Education First recommend that OSDE consider the following areas for possible technical assistance:

- ☑ **Engage in strategic planning:** OSDE should retain an external facilitator to bring key internal and external stakeholders together for a series of strategic planning sessions to take advantage of the momentum for TLE, coming out of the last legislative session, and build on the strong relationships OSDE has established in the past year. The goal of these sessions would be to generate consensus for a plan OSDE can pursue in the short- and medium-term to further strengthen TLE in collaboration with partners. These sessions could address topics such as goal setting, strategic priorities, progress monitoring and measurement, and sharing of best practices. An external facilitator can organize and facilitate these conversations at the beginning, with the expectation that over time, OSDE will take increasing responsibility for leading the sessions. SREB or the South Central Comprehensive Center can fill this facilitator role.
- ☑ **Develop a communication strategy:** OSDE should continue to plan to use SREB technical assistance funding to hire a local communications consultant to provide targeted guidance on reframing TLE as a vehicle for professional growth. This communications support will be especially important in helping the agency message the new growth goal requirement with intent. The consultant can help OSDE develop key messages for diverse audiences and create communications resources for teachers in particular, since most efforts in the state thus far have focused on informing administrators about TLE policy.

- ☑ **Learn from other states:** OSDE should actively engage counterparts in other states to learn how they have successfully addressed similar challenges. Should OSDE be interested in opportunities for this kind of learning, SREB can organize virtual meetings, conference calls and/or in-person sessions with SREB states and other states to support dialogue about teacher evaluation systems. These sessions may address a wide range of topics of particular interest to OSDE, such as analyzing data in a state system with multiple observation rubrics, monitoring an evaluation system's fidelity of implementation, controlling the quality of evaluator trainings in a state system with third-party training providers, delivering professional development for teachers and principals at scale, and implementing rural cooperatives. SREB will continue to encourage this collaboration through the technical assistance grant and communities of practice meetings.

- ☑ **Research growth goal best practices:** OSDE should seek a policy researcher to investigate evidence-based policies and practices to help shape Oklahoma's framework for the new growth goal. This research can identify lessons from the implementation of growth goals in other states, including how these states used growth goals to improve teacher effectiveness. A policy researcher may also present findings from this investigation to OSDE staff and the growth goal working group to inform their ongoing deliberations. SREB or several other groups like TNTP or the National Council on Teacher Quality can leverage significant policy and research expertise to support OSDE with this or related research, applying a national lens while also highlighting effective practices in SREB states.

- ☑ **Build knowledge-sharing platform for districts:** OSDE should consider a third-party provider to help the state build a curated online platform for districts to share TLE resources, such as rubric guides, state policies, professional development materials and modules, and other related tools. The goal of this platform would be to encourage districts to exchange knowledge with one another. While the state has a limited budget to create new content for this platform, including some technical assistance dollars already allocated for this purpose, OSDE could serve as facilitator among districts, including rural districts, interested in sharing their tools. OSDE can also seek SREB's help to identify other high-quality evaluation resources aligned to the state's TLE that can be included in the platform.

As OSDE considers the report findings, recommendations and technical assistance possibilities, SREB and Education First remain available for consultation. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Oklahoma educators. It continues to be a pleasure to work with your agency.

Appendix: Review Methodology for Oklahoma

On October 12-13, 2016, SREB and Education First visited Oklahoma City to interview OSDE staff and key stakeholders to collect information for this report.

1. OSDE staff interviews

Robyn Miller, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness & Policy Research
Jason Perez, Executive Director of Teacher & Leader Effectiveness
Robin Anderson, Director of Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Special Projects
Susan Pinson, Executive Director of Professional Development
Carolyn Thompson, Chief of Government Affairs
Lynn Xiang, Data Analyst

2. Stakeholder interviews

Members of OSDE's growth goal working group
Shawn Hime, Executive Director, Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA)
Ryan Owens, Executive Director, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA)
Daniel Craig, Executive Director, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA)
Bryan Duke, President, Oklahoma Association for Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE)
Alicia Priest, President, Oklahoma Education Association (OEA)
Carmen Furling, Government Relations Researcher, Professional Oklahoma Educators (POE)

3. Focus groups

Teachers (Durant, Glenpool, Mid-Del, McAlester, Oklahoma City and Deer Creek Public Schools)
Principals (Bethel, Marietta, Seminole, Broken Bow, Comanche and Edmond Public Schools)
TLE district leads (Mid-Del, Tulsa, Union and Oklahoma City Public Schools)

Furthermore, SREB and Education First reviewed publicly available information on TLE and requested additional documentation from OSDE, such as 2015-15 TLE data by district and evaluator training curricula for the Tulsa and Marzano models.

4. Document review

[Resources and Reports on OSDE's TLE Website](#) (HTML)
[Oklahoma House Bill 2957](#) (PDF)
[Oklahoma Senate Bill 2033](#) (HTML)
[Oklahoma Criteria for Effective Teaching and Administrative Performance](#) (HTML)
[TLE Observation & Evaluation Handbook for Evaluators Using the Tulsa Model](#) (PDF)
[TLE Qualitative Components](#) (HTML)
[TLE Theory of Action Brochure](#) (PDF)
[TLE Newsletters](#) (HTML)
[OSDE News and Blogs](#) (HTML)
[TLE Training](#) (HTML)
[TLE Update \(Aug. 18, 2015\)](#) (PDF)
[TLE Data Usage Information](#) (PDF)
[Teacher Evaluation Framework/Model Selection Criteria](#) (PDF)
[TLE Commission](#) (HTML)
[Oklahoma Education Dashboard \(OKED\) User Guide](#) (PDF)
[OAC 210:20-9-91 Application for New Licenses/Certificates](#) (HTML)
[OAC 210:20-9-96 Requirements for Renewal or Reissuance of Certificates](#) (HTML).
[Oklahoma Education Law Book](#) (PDF)
TLE Evaluators Training Curricula by LSI (Marzano model) and CCOSA (Tulsa model)
[Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model Alignment to the Oklahoma Criteria for Effective Teaching and Administrative Performance](#) (PDF)
2015-16 TLE Data by District
2016 Measurement Learning and Improvement (MLI) Survey of Oklahoma Teachers